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# The Picturesque Quality of the Pennsylvania German

AN ADDRESS, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
PRESENTED AT THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY

BY  
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With the exception of one picture of the “Bindnagel” pulpit by MR. T. F. NEWBY, Harrisburg, Pa., all the photographs used in the illustration of this paper have been taken by the writer.

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## THE PICTURESQUE QUALITY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN.



THERE is a phase of the life of our honored ancestry and of our respected contemporaries that has received little, if any, attention from those of the Pennsylvania-German Society who delight in exploiting the manifold excellencies of the Pennsylvania-German.

Many have been pleased to extol his bravery as a soldier; his wisdom as a statesman; his thrift as a farmer; his honesty in a position of trust — all these virtues have been “advertised by loving friends.” Even the triteness of his proverbs and the flexibility or the poetic capacity of his language have received their meed of praise from thoughtful and gifted admirers. I would like to present what may be termed his “Picturesque Quality.”

I have no doubt but that, in the development of my subject, there will be many suggestions or illustrations that are commonplace; but it would be well to remember that Millet’s world-famous paintings of the Barbizon peasants and their country are pictures of commonplaces, and the

fact that we are familiar with them does not change nor abate their picturesqueness. Here in our own Pennsylvania are to be found the types of men and women we have seen in noted pictures, and it does seem a bit singular that American artists have not made diligent use of the pictorial value of these, our neighbors, and their surroundings. Hundreds of painters flock every year to Holland, to France, to Italy, to put on canvas no better, and often less interesting, material than can be found in the sections I would have you see with me.

I think my awakening to the fact that one need not go abroad to be abroad was brought about once while a friend and myself were touring southeastern Pennsylvania as tramps, sleeping in barns and fattening on the proverbial hospitality of our Pennsylvania-German friends: we stopped a small boy to inquire about the road and instead of an answer he gave us a most elaborate grin. He could not speak English. An older sister who had had the advantages of a common-school education presently appeared and relieved the awkwardness of the situation for all of us. A little further on in the same journey we made the acquaintance of another fellow-citizen who, we learned, was sixty-five years old at the time, a scion of a family which had its origin in America not many years later than 1700. He was born in the house in which he still lived. Some folks might have thought him conservative to a fault, for he could not speak English either, nor had he ever ridden on a railway train — although the puff of a passing locomotive in the valley below was plainly audible at his house. This gentleman was then the owner of a magnificent collection of antiques, the legacies of two lines of his forebears, and the great pride of his life was his trust that there would be a big “voodoo” after his death.

Roughly speaking, the segment of a circle described from west to north of Philadelphia, taking that city as the center, and with radii seventy-five miles long, will comprehend that magnificent agricultural country which was peopled by the Palatine immigrants who commenced to occupy it in 1683, and which is mainly populated by their descendants to-day. In that year a small party of Mennonites came over in the *Concord* and settled at Germantown, now a most picturesque suburb of "Penn's green city on the banks of the Delaware."

That was the first lapping of the tide which soon swept over the new land. According to our friend Governor Pennypacker, in his story of Germantown, it was the beginning of the infusion of "that potent race which in the sixteenth century, under the lead of Luther, confronted the Pope; and which has done so much to enrich, strengthen and liberalize the State of Pennsylvania and to establish those commonwealths in the West, where in the future will rest the control of the nation." Persecution at home and the prospect of an undisturbed right to worship God as they saw fit, turned the faces of thousands and tens of thousands of these Germans to America and nerved them for the awful horrors of the long voyage in loathsome and disease-infested ships.

Gradually the country beyond Germantown was settled by them, and to such an extent did they come that a certain historic hero was prompted to protest against the influx for fear they would set up a government opposed to the authority of England, which, he urged, they were quite able to do. It is in the country which these people opened up and which their descendants have held for more than two centuries that our picturesque Pennsylvania Rhineland is to be found, and therein are the most

wonderful opportunities for the man with appreciation in his soul and a snap-shot camera in his hands.

Within twenty-five miles of Philadelphia are large sections in which the dialect of the Lower Rhine has been handed down with such integrity that the speech of one of these farmers would pass current in the land upon which the eyes of his ancestors of eight generations ago first opened. There is a story that one of them once visited his ancestral home and that he gained an audience with the king, upon whom he deigned to pay a friendly call, through his vociferous insistence that the palace guards should *sag der Koenig das en Bauer von Pennsylvanien* wanted to see him.

But, apart from this peculiarity of language, I think one can recognize Pennsylvania-Germany, whether here or transplanted in some far Western State, by its barns, those big red structures in which the thrifty farmer stores his crops and houses his sleek cattle. In the "happy valleys" of the Swatara, the Tulpehocken, the Hosen-sack, the Perkiomen, or wherever else he has set up his house and put the stamp of his approval on the land, his "well-tilled fields give back a hundred-fold," and he needs a big barn for the liberal returns for his toil and good judgment. God, said a famous warrior, is on the side of the heaviest artillery; one may reverently paraphrase that observation and explain these beneficent dispensations of Providence in our local Rhineland by a disposition on the part of its habitants to mix plenty of work with their religion. You can drive for nearly two miles along one single Lancaster county corn field, I have been told, and the same spirit which is the active principle of that sort of farming also directs the prosperity of scores of savings banks in the Pennsylvania-German capitals.



THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY.



GLIMPSES OF DOMESTIC LIFE IN PENNSYLVANIA GERMANY.



But there are many ways of proving my proposition that there is a wonderful wealth of picturesque quality here: and any one who has strayed into an old-fashioned Mennonite meeting will hardly need to be further argued with. One Sunday morning, in the upper end of Montgomery county, we were moved to take the road behind a wagon load of four black-bonneted sisters. The way led to a plain little meeting-house situated in the midst of a grove of great trees; the long rows of sheds were filled with teams; nearest the house were the four stalls in a special shed reserved for the use of the preachers. And what a revelation that step over the threshold disclosed! Looking across a sea of bobinet-capped heads to the preacher's bench, there sat behind the desk the four ministers, all elderly gray-headed men, with their long hair parted in the middle and combed smoothly down and curled over their ears. Hanging on pegs driven into the wall above and behind them were their big felt hats. One of the preachers was "lining out" a hymn from a century-old copy of "*Die Kleine Harfe*"—the favorite Mennonite hymnal—which the *vorsänger* (precentor) set to an ancient melody that would simply baffle any attempt to represent it in written characters; it was so full of evasive twistings and turnings that black and white could never render its subtle colorings. It must be borne in mind that artificial helps in a musical way are not tolerated, and so the *vorsänger* is a very important functionary in the congregation; the gentleman in the present instance had officiated at "meeting" for more than fifty years. Of course, Scriptural authority is quoted for the persistent shutting out of the organ.

After the hymn, one of the ministers read a selection from an old German Bible, and then another preached a sermon in the language all the members could best understand.

The remoteness of my Mennonite ancestry put the sermon somewhat beyond my comprehension, although it needed no knowledge of seventeenth-century German to take in the fact that he was a very forceful speaker. Without any so-called higher education, this minister was called from the plow to the pulpit; he was chosen in the usual method—that is, by lot from a number of candidates for the ministry. A paper bearing the words “this is the lot” was concealed by the bishop in one of a number of hymn-books corresponding to the number of candidates, and the calling came his way. The argument urged in favor of such a manner of making a choice is that God knows better than a partisan congregation just who is best adapted for His service in that capacity and He will lead the right man to the prepared book. To a congregation to whom learned degrees are no object the method is a very simple and convenient one, and after all it would seem to settle any question as to factional choice and congregational strife in such matters.

As may be imagined, the sermons preached at these meetings are presumed to be the result of immediate inspiration, and they often abound in homely similes and rather personal references. I recall that the speaker whom I have mentioned introduced into his discourse that day a very apt metaphor in which the president judge of our county court figured; there was a pun on his name that was used to point a moral for the good of Mennonite souls. This minister was a rather feeble-looking old man, and he opened his sermon in a faint but distinct voice, which he modulated in a manner that any educated orator might envy, and that certainly must have emphasized the earnestness of the message he brought to his audience. At times he would swell forth into a strain of great dramatic power,

and I noticed he did this particularly when the thirty babies in the congregation were fussing in chorus.

It is an unwritten rule, I was told, that a youngster is fit to be brought to meeting when he has attained to the age of five weeks, and from that time on he is taken by his parents until he is old enough to express a desire to walk alone in newness of life and to ask for baptism by the decision of his own mind. When these fretful youngsters got too vociferous, the mothers would carry their struggling offspring out into the vestibule of the meeting-house and there administer whatever attention was best suited to the infantile needs, and then return to their places in the room. As a thoroughly democratic institution a Mennonite meeting is certainly to be commended. Fancy a fashionable city congregation encouraging the development of the church-going habit in such style! From my seat in the married men's section of the room, I could look over at the rest of the family in the midst of the married women and note that questions of orthodoxy or heterodoxy were not worrying the plump little Mennonite who, from his mother's knee, crowed and flirted with our own diminutive and already baptized Lutheran bud. It is of interest to observe here, that the single men and single women also have their sections on opposite sides of the room, with the central area of married and elderly women separating them.

The first sermon over, everybody knelt in silent prayer; then there was another half-hour sermon by another preacher; then another prayer, and after that a third preacher spoke briefly, and the meeting "broke." The men reached their hats and coats from pegs in the wall or from the racks suspended from the ceiling the whole length of the room; the women but on their black

bonnets over their dainty white "prayer head-coverings"; then the teams drove up to the gate and the entrancing glimpse of an old world life was gone.

I believe I am not straining a point when I insist that we are indebted for so many of the beautiful things which our forebears have given us, to their environment in the fatherland. They had been nurtured in a country which abounded in the masterpieces of those marvelous Middle Ages; they had absorbed ideas that were far enough above mediocrity, and it was but natural that after they came here and when they had occasion to give expression to their labor in a lasting form, they did it with some grace—a method which seems to indicate that they heard Ruskin's message to the world long before he preached it. It is hardly necessary to elaborate this thought much further than to refer to the illuminated manuscripts that Dr. Sachse has told us about, the ceramics that Mr. Barber has so beautifully illustrated, and so many other of their productions which are sought after and respected in our own day and which have inspired other voluminous publications.

It is in line also to mention the consummate skill of some of those early workers in wood and stone, whose handiwork, thanks to the ruthlessness of the modern "committee on improvements," is getting to be more and more a matter of tradition. There are still a few old pulpits left in these early German churches, and how beautiful they are when compared with much of the work that goes into churches nowadays! Some of the big furniture factories would probably turn out as much in an hour as those forgotten artists who fashioned the Trappe or Bindnagel pulpits could in a year—but what a difference in the creations! This old workmanship shows a care for detail that is wonderfully painstaking; the mouldings are gouged or



chamfered or chiseled or carved by hand; the only way they could possibly be reproduced to-day would be by the same laborious method.

Before there was a Pennsylvania-German Society it has happened that unspeakable vandalism has entered men's souls and stirred them into building a "new, up-to-date church"; the stately old house had gone out of fashion. I know of a fine stone colonial structure that was out of tune with a congregation's notions of what a church building should be, so they tore down the old one and got exactly what they wanted — a red brick rectangular block of a house with meaningless finials at the corners of the roof and a spire that would disgrace almost any ordinary carpenter. In its unvarnished ugliness it crowns the hill-top to-day and vaunts itself in place of the old house. For two weeks they worked to dislodge the honestly built walls of the first masons; the small boys of the neighborhood played "soldier" with lances made of long sections of exquisitely carved mouldings, and a nearby farmer bought the high pulpit and turned it into a chicken house!

The old Trappe Church has been happily preserved from any such fate, although it narrowly escaped a miserable destruction at one stage of its history. The pipes of the famous Gottlieb Mittelberger organ have furnished "sinkers" for the fishing lines of the youth of a generation ago, or baubles for the sacrilegious relic hunters of more recent times; but through some oversight the long-handled *klingsäcke* with bell and tassel to awaken congregational interest in their purpose, were not absorbed by the profaners of the temple. As Governor Pennypacker has been the champion of the village of the Trappe, the discoverer of its historical importance, so to speak — so his gifted brother Isaac W. Pennypacker gave to the

world the well-known poem on the church and its reminiscences that was written when loving hands were not as tender with it as they are to-day :

“ O Church! that of old proudly flourished,  
Upon thee decay gently falls,  
And the founders by whom thou wert nourished,  
Lie low in the shade of thy walls;  
No stone need those pioneer sages  
To tell their good works to the ages;  
Thy ruin their greatness recalls.”

Now I do not believe it is simply the historic flavor of this old building that interests visitors. People who know no more history than a fly, go up there and they do not need to have the attraction pointed out. The church, as you doubtless know, was erected in 1743, and it is of especial note to us as the scene of much of the labor of the Lutheran patriarch Muhlenberg's life. It is simple and graceful in form, and when we recall how little actual money was spent in its building — it was chiefly the handiwork of those who were to worship in it — it must appeal to us all the more strongly as a crystallization of their love and devotion; it would be rank impiety to destroy it. From the pious inscription over its main doorway, wherein the names of some of its builders are apotheosized in the mellifluous tongue of the Cæsars, to the curiously wrought weather vane on the peak of the gambrel roof, the church stands for the virility of its builders and their inherent good sense of nice proportions.

Then, too, there are many exceedingly interesting specimens of early Pennsylvania-German architectural taste to be found in the communities that have been long indented with their life. Germantown alone has enough examples — such as the Johnson house, the Daniel Pastorius

house, the Wister House, and others — to make my case for me. Whether Pennsylvania-German craftsmen always actually did the work on these houses, I am not prepared to say, but certain it is that Pennsylvania-German money paid for them, and if our forefathers and foremothers were as careful then as they are now about getting what they paid for, it is a pretty safe proposition that those beautiful homes are models of their extremely good taste and expressions of their high artistic instinct. There are a number of old houses in Lancaster too that have always impressed me with their sense of coziness and quaintness. Many of you, perhaps, have seen those low one-story brick dwellings with dormer windows in the long-pitched roof, and if you have, I venture the observation that you also have admired the good judgment of the old-timer who believed not so much in building high up as in “big owet,” and who preferred to furnish his household with some other exercise less laborious than stair-climbing. These houses are now surrounded by much later edifices: comparisons are easy to make; when one is out either for pictures or a house to live in, it wouldn't be difficult to make a choice, to my notion.

I fear that I have so deep-rooted a prejudice for what these ancient Pennsylvania-German carpenters have done, that I am almost ready to believe they couldn't make anything homely if they tried. You know an artist gets so subconsciously expert that he cannot make a false line or wrong perspective; one looks for polished rhetoric and beautifully rounded periods in his favorite author. You may recall the porch over the door to the Sisters' House at Ephrata — a few whitewashed boards, an arbor of foliage, and some blooming plants, these are the simple elements in a composition that has always seemed so wonderfully

pretty to me. Dr. Sachse has written and illustrated so much about the Ephrata folks and their doings that almost the last word has been said about every phase of their intensely interesting community — still I venture this example which made an exquisite picture for me one day, this humble doorway with its little closet window to one side, and the jars of home-made preserves standing therein giving back the sunlight in luscious transparent reds and yellows.

It was a very pretty habit among some of those early Pennsylvania-German home-makers to have a “house-blessing” carved on a stone in a conspicuous place, and in this connection I recall the rarely interesting house in which Peter Wentz and Rose Wentz started their lives together. They remembered that “except the Lord keep the house they labor in vain that build it.” So they caused a tablet to be carved and set in the solid wall where it could be seen by all who entered in :

P. W. R. W. JESUS KOM IN MEINE HAUS WEI CHE NIMMER MER HER AUS. KOM MIT DEINER GNADEN GÜD UND STELLE MEINE SEEL ZU FREED
---

A century and a half have passed since Peter Wentz and his good wife invoked this blessing on their house, but its snug and comfortable appearance to-day would seem to warrant the conclusion that the invocation had brought good within its walls. One event in its existence will always insure it a place on history's page, at any rate; it was used by General Washington and his official family

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PLEASING EXAMPLES OF PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN ARCHITECTURE.





as headquarters for three days in October, 1777, and it was from that house that a general order was issued for thanksgiving for the surrender of Burgoyne.

Another picturesque adjunct of these old homes in the country was the bake-house — and, like a good many other things, it has spoiled for lack of exercise. It is so easy to buy bread, or a modern range, nowadays that the usefulness of a bake-house is forgotten. But what a wealth of artistic effort in a culinary way one of these houses suggests! Several years ago we sat down to dinner with our venerable and estimable friend Abraham H. Cassel; besides a lavish abundance of other food there were six different kinds of pie and cake on the table. Some time after I spoke to another friend about this sample of Pennsylvania-German opulence and he answered me by inviting me to go with him to his Berks county boyhood home, and I remember that among the delicacies which graced the table that day were twelve pies and custards and cakes, all different and appropriately furrowed or edged for purposes of identification before cutting into them. The good housewife afterward showed me into the pie section of her cellar and delightedly displayed the rest of her Thursday's baking; it was Sunday and there were still forty-three pieces of all sorts left for domestic consumption.

While I have the same good woman in mind, perhaps I may interject that she is keeping alive another nearly lost art in Pennsylvania-Germany. She is proud of the fact that she has spun the thread for a complete outfit of bed-linen for each of her marriageable daughters. What a dower it is! While at work on the last marriage portion I had an opportunity to take a flash-light picture of her at work one night; her occupation suggested to some one in

the party a conundrum which in English is, "What kind of tow cannot be spun?" The answer is, "applebutter." That doesn't sound very laughable, but when you hear it in the original it is better: *Vas fer varreck Komma net shpinna? Ludvarreck!*

"The genial current of the soul" is an easy thing to start flowing in such a company and from my note book of that night's experience, I glean another "choke": "*Vas fer en esel komma net rida?*" Then they laughed because they could never guess that it was a hornet (*hunesel*) that couldn't be ridden. *Vas gesht tsu der teer rei und glensicht net; vas gesht auf der ofa und fer brend sich net; vas gesht ouf der tisch und sham't sich net?* "Why, the sun!" The sun goes through the door and glances around not; he gets on the stove and burns himself not; and he gets on the table and shames himself not! The occasion was also the first time I was brought face to face with the problem that has been grappled with by some of our verse-makers, that of rhythmical translation into the "mundart" of Pennsylvania-Germany. Here is "Susanna," as sung by one of our hosts:

O Susanna!  
 Weinest net fur mich!  
 Ich komm't fun Alabama hier  
 Tsu shpiela sticht fur dich!

It seems that one mention suggests another while dealing with this subject, and I cannot forego the other domestic arts of the women-folk that seem to help along my story. Is there anything more beautiful than a door-yard in Pennsylvania-Germany, with its riot of color from the "old-fashioned" flowers growing in the beautiful simplicity of no apparent arranging! Red and pink and white and purple hollyhocks in their richness of velvety hues, and blue-

flags and phlox, and sweet-williams, and fragrant honeysuckle stare at you from over the whitewashed pickets or straggle through the fence openings in luxurious abandon! Then, like great dull gems, ripening tomatoes, balsam apples or cucumbers stud this wealth of lesser foliage. And later on, this profligacy gives place to other orders; dahlias or hardy chrysanthemums keep the spot bright and cheerful almost until the day that the first snow comes to hide the wreck of yesterday's glory. The garden is also woman's realm in Pennsylvania-Germany; she makes it, almost literally "from the ground up"; and one of my blue-ribbon photographs is a stolen snap-shot over a garden fence in the Perkiomen region, of an unconscious copy of a study that Millet would have drawn had he seen it. I don't know that there is anything poetic about boiling soap either, but it is the province of the artist to idealize, and I have no doubt our painters of the American-Barbizon school could make something touching out of that characteristic harbinger of spring in Pennsylvania-Germany; you know the Angelus was once irreverently dubbed "the Potato Diggers," and I presume a good painter with great gift of rhapsody could find a fetching name for a plein-air composition of an old woman in a brilliant kerchief stirring a smoking cauldron of her annual clean-up of the winter's fat scraps.

About the most comfortable spot in a Pennsylvania-German house is in the corner of the kitchen, the seat at the end of the *holz-kist*—and what creation of modern cabinet maker can conjure up such dreams of comfort as that! A great fire-place, long since boarded up, because of the introduction of a modern cook stove, was the first cause for the existence of the wood-box, but the comfort of that particular corner was discovered and the wood-box

stays even if the fire-place did have to go. You need only to look at the polish on that section of the top of the chest and to observe where the paint is rubbed off the framework of the high mantel to know how magnetic the spot is. It is the favorite resort of the man of the house on a Sunday morning — that is, when the young folks have taken all the teams and he has reasonable excuse for staying home. Then he gets down the old Bible that his ancestors brought from Nuremberg and he finds in it the same refreshing interest that they did so long ago.

The world “with its ceaseless roar and roll” seems very far away from that seat on the wood-box, and we have been hardly pressed many a time by the man who sat enthroned on it, and who has had a thoughtful lifetime in which to find an appropriate text or scriptural argument for every exigency of debate. I remember once we were discussing the Chicago World’s Fair, an event which our host denounced as a most disgraceful extravagance. “World’s Fair! World’s Fair,” said he; “Vy, no Christian could go! Suppose, some time, you haf a Christian’s fair; how many would go to it? All zis noise ant show ain’d right!”

In the opposite corner of the kitchen stands the grandfather clock, one of Haggy’s masterpieces, and one of a collection of six which an old time progenitor had made for and bequeathed to his daughters, who in turn were to give them to their daughters and so on from one generation to another. In a closet alongside the clock is an old china tea set of wonderful delicacy and beauty. The cups are bell-shaped and are ornamented with a little blue flower. There is not a nick in any piece and not a piece missing, and it has an authenticated history running back for 125 years. Some day, when a new household fire is lighted, the venerable timepiece and that tea service will be part of

the bride's dower, along with the store of homespun linen that was finished, part of it, generations ago, and part of it the recent gift of a rarely accomplished mother.

In another room there is a closet full of the most valued porcelain treasures, row upon row, pile upon pile, dinner plates in dark blue; great trenchers decorated with those curious tulip designs; creamers and tea-pots whose curves and finish are not met with nowadays. These are the "best" dishes, and their use is coincident with Christmas or some other holiday or high social function.

It is curious to note how the early settlements of our forefathers followed the watercourses — and in that fact I find material aid in the further development of my theme. The streams that refreshed our Rhineland were naturally enough turned to utilitarian purposes from the very beginning. Oil, grist and fulling mills were essential in the domestic economy of the day, and time was when the Perkiomen, for example, kept a mill of some sort in full splash for every mile of its course — and most of these mills had good Pennsylvania-German names in front of them, too. Many of the mills are there yet — for millwrights of that generation were honest builders — although their occupation has largely faded away before the advance of modern competition. Almost the first thing that strikes the visitor to one of these mills is the apparent profligacy of building material, particularly of posts and girders. Timbers such as would hold up a present-day six-story structure, were used in a two-story chopping mill; the adze-marks of a century and a half ago may be covered up by the dust of ages, but the live-oak is just as good as ever.

"The old mill!" What a perennial and fruitful source of inspiration it has been to the poet; even the laureates

of Pennsylvania-Germany have been stirred into song about the dust-penciled cobwebs festooned from beam and rafter, the rhythmic "clacka-clacka clacka-clacka" of the damsel, the rumbling diapason of the masterwheel, the swinging, splashing of the great overshot. Even the miller himself with his proverbial golden thumb and other paraphernalia once considered so necessary to the conduct of a successful business, has been embalmed in many a sonnet, too. The mill-wheel was very picturesque, but it had its disadvantages; the poet ought to be on hand some cold winter morning, when everything was frozen solid, to hear an able-bodied fellow-citizen down in the wheel pit chopping things loose with an axe and making complimentary remarks about that *fdomda wasser-rote*. So the turbine has supplanted the old wheel to a great extent and the silvery spray, with the rest of the lyric accessories, has likewise departed.

The tourist who is being whirled across the Keystone State may occasionally catch glimpses of a curiously clad people at the railway stations at the city of Lancaster and the smaller towns and villages east of that place. Their homes are in the "green-walled" country watered by the wonderfully beautiful Conestoga, Cocalico and Pequea creeks, in sections that are not traversed by main highways of travel.

For instance, there is a man in an odd suit of brown or gray homespun; if it is winter, a long overcoat supplemented with a short cape reaching to the shoulders gives an added quaintness to his garb; from beneath his broad and straight-brimmed felt hat his long hair falls over the collar of his coat; a good pair of honest eyes set above a strongly fashioned nose look the truth which the man's finely chiseled lips are known to speak. The man is a



representative of one of the most curious survivals in all America, that peculiar organization known as the Amish Mennonites, a schism of the Mennonite church which seceded from the main body about the year 1693. Jacob Ammon led the movement, and so he and his followers in Switzerland and Alsace were known as "Amish," as are also those of these days who hold to the doctrines he insisted upon.

So far as language, manners, dress and traditions are concerned the present day "Amish" are foreigners in America; and to all intents and purposes the visitor to the hospitable community in which they have lived for many generations is far enough from home, too. The language one hears is almost the same as that of their far-off fatherland of two centuries ago; the dress of the women suggests Holland or Brittany; the religion, with its austerities and its curious practices and observances, smacks of the days of the Reformation. And, almost within sight of the hills which bound their peaceful valleys, the smoke of factory chimneys and rushing railway trains, tells of a busy world wherein people are panting and throbbing in the chase for riches or fame or some other unsatisfied ambition, while the Amish go on in their sincere way working out the destiny of the race as implied in the petition, "Thy kingdom come \* \* \* on earth as it is in Heaven!"

Pursuing our study of the picturesque, we drove one glorious summer Sunday up to the gate of a farmhouse in the land of the Amish on Conestoga Creek. We had been told that service was to be held there that day—religious services of that particular branch of the Amish Mennonites are not held in regular houses of worship; they are always held around among the homes of the members, because that is one of their ways of impressing on the mind

of the people the importance of religion as an every-day, a real, adjunct to life; and then, too, there is no temptation to the slightest exhibition of vanity about church architecture or church furniture in which the true spirit of religion might be lost sight of, when the entire system of church houses and decorations is altogether done away with.

And what a sight the lane leading into the farm-house, and the area-way around its great barn was! There were sixty-five yellow canvas covered wagons, as nearly alike — to the casual observer — as one Waterbury watch is like another. The sight suggested a wagon factory; and the collection displayed, the result of particularly enthusiastic effort on the part of the builders in turning out vehicles modeled after the same pattern. When we became better acquainted with the various owners, we asked how they ever distinguished their own property, how they managed to get the right horse affixed to his own shafts.

“Oh, we joost look at ’em; we know ’em!” was the answer. One man added that he recognized his wagon because the back of it was peppered full of shot-holes, a souvenir of a shooting match his boys had one day at home. Another said he had a little block nailed to the floor of his wagon for the comfort of his short-legged wife, and the block couldn’t be moved without taking up the floor of the wagon. And so the fine distinctions were developed until the whole bunch of sixty-five wagons did appear different, after all.

The apparent absence of whips on the wagons was the occasion of some remark between us; but, prompted by one of the more jovial brethren, we looked in some of them and saw that a tough hickory switch was a part of their equipment. It must be remembered that the Amish-

THE PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY.



AT AN AMISH MEETING NEAR LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA.



man strictly observes the spirit of the injunction implied in the saying "A merciful man is merciful to his beast," and so one must travel far to find a handsomer or better cared for collection of equinity than was seen at Friend Aaron's that day; but that little hickory switch is useful when some Gentile owner of a roadster imagines he can drive around the big Amish bay and his half-ton or more of heavy harness, wagon and passenger list. In a "test of speed," as the brush is euphemistically termed, they do say that the dust does not often fall on the yellow-covered Amish outfit, even if the driver has no whalebone with which to touch up his nag.

The passengers of the sixty-five wagons crowded the two large lower rooms of the farmhouse, while the overflow filled the porch, where the droning voice of the minister preaching in German could be plainly heard. In one way it was good that we could not grasp enough of the discourse to keep us interested, otherwise the abounding richness of pictorial matter might have been lost. We sat on a plain wooden bench on the porch for a while; just opposite us in a row, were a lot of youngsters ranging from two to six years, whose conduct throughout the meeting was just as demure as if they had been ten times those ages. Beside us were big lusty Amishmen in their queer-looking clothes, sitting in thoughtful attitudes, following carefully every word spoken, although a few of the younger men, in whom the spirit was doubtless willing but the flesh weak, dozed and bobbed their heads, waking up with a start and trying to appear bright and unconcerned as they felt the gaze of an elder of the meeting resting upon them.

After one has been there himself, it is not so difficult to understand why the rest of the world knows so little about

the wonderful quaintness and the unique interest of this bit of Pennsylvania-Germany.

For conscientious reasons the hard-working farmers of the Amish persuasion give very scant encouragement to the man with pencil or camera and so the intensely picturesque quality of an all-day Amish meeting for instance, has been practically unrecorded until the pictures we made on the occasion here told about were surreptitiously "snapped." Now and then an Amishman strays into the larger cities, and people turn around on the streets for a second look at him and his clothes. But think of a hundred Amishmen in one group! all with broad-brimmed hats, long hair cut straight across the forehead — banged, a Gentile would say it was — and just as evenly trimmed at the back of the neck. Frivolous folk say that a bowl is used as a guide for the scissors of the domestic Amish barber. Every man wears a tail coat, with no lapels or buttons, hooks and eyes being the only proper means for fastening that garment, while his trousers are cut in the fashion of generations ago.

And what delight it is to get into an argument with them on the subject of dress, or the propriety of using tobacco or strong drink! Those superfluous buttons which a worldly tailor generally sews on the sleeves of a coat or at the middle of the back of a cutaway — survivals of the days when cloth cuffs were buttoned back and sword belts were worn — were seriously condemned as opportunities for "devil to hang somesing on." The retention of these vanities was abhorred by them, and they insisted upon the less conspicuous hooks and eyes so that his satanic majesty while searching for convenient places to display his temptations would, of course, be put to confusion. The Amishmen wears all the hair on his face that nature provides, except on the upper lip and that is shaven for the sake of



cleanliness in eating. Two verses from Leviticus settle the tonsorial question, in these words: "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard" (xix., 27). "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard" (xxi., 5).

As to the use of strong drink, the well-known poser, "What do you suppose the Lord turned that water into wine for at the marriage in Cana of Galilee?" was the clincher with which they closed the discussion on total abstinence. "The one thing I am sorry for now is that I wasn't on hand to get some of that wine. My, but it must have been good!" said one, as he blew the smoke of a Lancastrian perfecto into rings above his head; and then he smacked his lips, perhaps in joyful anticipation of the glorious feast that is to be spread for all good and temperate Amishmen some day.

Of course, the meeting would not have been complete without the big dinner served to all the congregation, including the visitors. While the men were talking religion or crops or stock under the trees after the services were over, the women were getting the dinner ready. There was table room to serve the guests only in relays of about fifty. When they entered the house they threw their hats into a window seat until it was filled to the top of the lower sash. The hats were more nearly alike — if the expression may be allowed — than their wagons, but every one picked out his own head-gear unerringly when he went out.

Following the example of an elder at each table, every one bowed his head in silent prayer before starting in on the *shunka flesh*, *gebrota hinkel*, *lud-varreck*, *kucha* (ham, roast chicken, applebutter, cakes) innumerable, and other

choice products of Pennsylvania-German culinary art with which the tables were so bountifully laden. It simplifies the dish question very much, at these congregational meals, to use the same coffee cups and saucers right through without washing or rinsing them for each set of guests; custom has sanctioned the plan, and no one objects to the liberal deposit of coffee grounds and partly dissolved sugar in the cup when he comes to the table in relay number four, for instance. If a Gentile appetite should suffer on that account, however, it would receive on the other hand, a much more pronounced stimulus from the sweet-faced Amish girls who waited on the table and tempted the diner with the choicest of the homely delicacies. It is customary at the end of each meal to "return thanks" in silence, and after that service all file out of the great room to make room for another relay of hungry ones. The women in the interim make some few minor changes in the tableware and replenish the sadly depleted stock of eatables.

But the Amish children! Where in America are children as picturesque? The little ones have the same proclivities for fun that children display the world over, but their excessive quaintness is best appreciated as one sees them playing tag, or teasing the watch-dog, or chasing butterflies, or doing the thousand and one other pretty things good-natured children can do. They are dressed exactly after the pattern of their grandfathers or grandmothers, and it does seem so far beneath the dignity of those little ones to be cavorting around the yard and raising just as much racket as the veriest street arabs. As soon as the little Amish girl can walk she appears in skirts which reach to her shoe-tops, and a white cap, a white shoulder kerchief and a white apron add their unique finish.

The dresses are of various colors of stuffs, although each

girl's dress is the same throughout. Deep purple is much affected by the Amish women, while dark brown, drab and black are popular; so it may be imagined that wealth of color is not the least attractive feature in the artistic ensemble of an Amish meeting. There is only one style of wearing the hair among the women and there can be very little improvement on it. The hair is parted exactly in the middle and combed smoothly down toward the temples, where two plaits are started, carried around and gathered into a knot just under the edge of the white mull cap above the nape of the neck.

As soon as the Amish boy is entitled to his first trousers he is put at once into long breeches of the old-fashioned "broad-fall front" variety, with drawing-strings around the waist to keep them attached to his person, just as his father's and grandfather's are built. He starts in early also to get his hair in the style he is to wear it through life. It is rather difficult, ordinarily, for the uninformed to say whether the infant which a fond mother dotes over is a boy or a girl, but there can be no mistaking the sex of the juvenile Amish when the outward signs are noted. The boy has his hair cut square across at the back of the neck, while his little girl cousin invariably wears that becoming white cap. I recall a picture of four children—two demure little girls in charge of two smaller boys—which was captured during the progress of the meeting for the purpose of illustrating these peculiarities in dress; it showed, furthermore, a very pretty grace of behavior on the part of the children at a religious meeting; the boys sat next to next, between the two girls, and just as I snapped the shutter one of the boys was "making faces" at his neighbor, but before the imbroglio could reach an acute stage the little girls shifted the boys to the ends of the

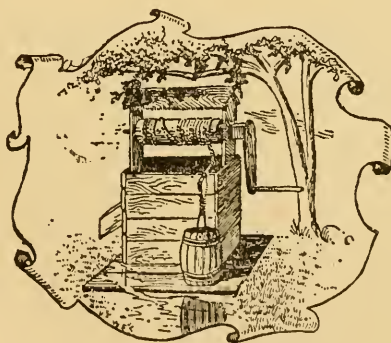
bèch. Diplomacy was writ large in the scene, and the two photographic plates the incident cost were happily used.

It may be rather far-fetched to say that the greatness and richness of Pennsylvania-Germany are exemplified in the dressing of these youthful representatives of a "peculiar people." There is little Rebecca, for example, in a royal purple dress that has two tucks in the sleeves, one at the hips and two more just above the hem of the skirt. Diminutive Enoch has a tuck in the bottom of his trousers — the waistband is fastened away up near his armpits; his shirt sleeves are similarly shortened. As the youngsters grow, the clothes are lengthened to accommodate their increasing stature, and when they have outgrown the garments the tucks are restored and the clothes go to younger children. Doesn't it seem reasonable enough to believe that all the thrift of these Amishmen is good leaven in the great lump of modern extravagance, and perhaps, after all, their homely virtues of industry, economy and simplicity may be more and more emulated?

Oh, it is a rare country, this land of grandfathers' clocks and finger-itching crockery, this paradise on earth for tramps, this delightful Pennsylvania-Germany! In some of its remote sections are valleys peopled with ghosts; where spooks hold high carnival in dismantled powder-mills and abandoned houses and barns; where princes of story tellers are still to be found who can spin yarns about the shadowy denizens in a style that will almost curdle your blood; where you can hear of "charms" from a "seventh" book of Moses that, if rightly employed, will make one invisible to his pursuer and invulnerable to his foes; where incantations exorcise evil spirits and cure disease. And there are pages of its serious history upon

which you can read of a certain grimly humorous minister who, in the stirring days antedating the Revolution, got himself disliked for preaching a sermon on the text: "Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished" (Eccles., IV. : 13). The story of "His Mother's Sermon" in Dr. Watson's Bonnie Brier Bush collection lacks the beauty and dramatic power of a real one that could be told of a young Lutheran clergyman who came here in 1793, whose trial, romance and life's great happiness were found in the peaceful valley that is still musical with "the Perkiomen, singing all the day."

But why multiply instances for you of Pennsylvania-German ancestry, when, out of the experience of most of you, you know that each memory-haunted community in this beautiful land is a "Glen" in an entrancing "Drumtochty," awaiting the glorifying pen of a sympathetic Mac-laren; a near-by Barbizon awaiting the immortalizing brush of an appreciative Millet.











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